

Like similar areas in rural Maine, ancient stonewalls run through the woods on the Richmond Estate like veins in the hands of an old man, reminding us of the determination, skill and hard work of the people who once lived there. The evolution of this property is not necessarily unique but it represents the cultural, historical and environmental changes our State and country have endured. Changing from a wilderness, to a working farm, to a gentleman's farm, to a lovely estate, certainly paints a clear picture of the way we as a society have evolved.

This process of change is quite significant to the town of Camden and the State of Maine. There is also an illustrious history associated with the Richmond Estate. During the early twentieth century the property was distinguished as one of the most beautiful estates in the State but it eventually fell to ruin. Fortunately, before it was too late, new owners purchased the Estate and diligently restored it back to its original grandeur. This then, is the story of the Richmond Estate...its land, its people, its houses, its glory, its ruin, its renaissance...its significance.



The main house photographed around 1926

During my research, I had the great privilege of talking with many people regarding the Richmond Estate. However, my most important resource was a delightful lady by the name of Barbara (Rich) Anderson. Barbara was born in 1931 and grew up on the Estate. Her Grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Rich Sr., purchased the property in 1924 and the family continued living there for forty-two years.

I am so grateful to Barbara for the time she took to share her memories, her stories and her pictures. Still residing in Camden, Barbara is now a successful artist. Upon looking at her work, it is easy to see that the sweet memories of her childhood still inspire her today.



*Walter J. Rich Jr. and
daughter Barbara, 1931*

3



*Barbara Rich Anderson
April 2005*

4



*Photo of bluff rock where it is believed
Edna St. Vincent Millay once stood*

5



Barbara's painting of the same

6

Through live interviews and telephone conversations, Barbara Rich Anderson shared with me all she remembered about life on the estate. I also talked with the present owners, Don and Patrisha McLean, as well as numerous others who at one time or another visited, worked or lived on the estate. After many hours spent at the Registry of Deeds in Rockland, I was able to draw together a fairly accurate summation of the Estate's transfer of deeds, starting from the late 1700s to the present day. I personally shot most of the recent photographs included in this paper. Barbara Rich Anderson, Don and Patrisha McLean, the St. Louis Historical Society and the Camden History Center provided the black and white photographs.

Unearthed Artifacts



*Old bottles, tin bowls, light bulbs
and china were all found buried on the property*

7



Rusted farm tools buried for years

8

Many of these relics are now part of the permanent collection of the Camden History Center.

Transfer of Deeds

Aug. 25, 1903	Elizabeth K. Montgomery to Harry J. Jackson	Book 131 p. 45
Sept. 30, 1903	Harry J. Jackson to Thomas A. Hunt	Book 24 p. 449
Dec. 18, 1905	Thomas A. Hunt to William L. Brown	Book 141 p. 489
Sept. 25, 1906	William L. Brown to Charles H. McKee	Book 141 p. 332
Nov. 1, 1913	Charles H. McKee to Oscar Saenger	Book 164 p. 55
April 4, 1914	Charlotte Wells Saenger to Henry H. Windsor Sr.	Book 160 p. 214
July 9, 1924	Henry H. Windsor to Walter J. Rich	Book 240 p. 128
Oct. 10, 1966	Mabel E. Rich to Ernest H. Oliver	Book 454 p. 321
April 4, 1977	Ernest H. Oliver to Laite-Soley Enterprises	Book 300 p. 76
Jan. 16, 1984	Laite-Soley Enterprises Foreclosure to Heritage Bank	Book 350 p. 42
July 12, 1985	Heritage Bank to Dudley Hawkins Jr.	Book 1031 p.56
Mar. 31, 1991	Nancy P. Hawkins to Don McLean	Book 262 p. 365

Endnote 3

The History

For the people of Mid-Coast Maine, the Richmond Estate symbolizes stability, wealth, and pride. It is rare to find a person living in this area that has not heard of the Estate, let alone visited there. Perched high above the town of Camden, with breathtaking views of Lake Megunticook, Penobscot Bay and the surrounding Camden Hills, the Richmond Estate compares to no other property in the State of Maine. Driving along Route 52, one cannot help but notice the majestic mansion that sits upon the hill across the lake. Records indicate that the mansion was built in the winter of 1907 but the property itself has a much longer history. ⁴

Historic deeds record that the property has been purchased and exchanged since the late 1700's. It is very difficult, however, to determine a clean line of owners from that time. Prior to 1822 the records are vague and muddled and often skip from one owners name to another without any explanation of why. Most likely this was due to deaths of family members and the passing down of property in wills. ⁵ Also, many of the town records were destroyed in the "Great Camden Fire" which occurred on November 10th of 1892.⁶ It was also discovered that throughout the early years, countless small sale transactions took place. Parcels of land were acquired and added to the estate while at other times some of the land was sold off. It is almost impossible to determine the boundary markers from the early years. In the deeds before 1900, the markers were described as large trees, stumps and logs, which have certainly all but died and rotted by now. It is believed that at one time the Estate totaled over 500 acres of land and included at least 495 feet of shore frontage on Lake Megunticook, once referred to as Canaan Lake. ⁷

It is believed that at the time of the re-gifting of the "20 Associates" in 1766, a man by the name of Samuel Russell was awarded the property. However, there is no deed to prove this. The land described seems to have encompassed what is now known as the Richmond Estate.

Robinson's History of Camden and Rockport indicates that,

"Sometime in the 1760s a man by the name of Samuel Russell first settled the western area of Camden and was shut off from any communication from the Harbor except for a bridle path which crossed over Molineaux's and thence came down the river to the little growing village". ⁸

The property boundaries did indeed once extend from what is now spelled "Molyneux" Road, up Howe Hill Road and across Rt. 105 to Megunticook Lake in Camden, all the way to Rt. 235 in Hope. Today the property makes up less than half of that amount. Although it now consists of approximately 172 acres, the Estate no longer includes lake frontage or boundaries in the town of Hope.

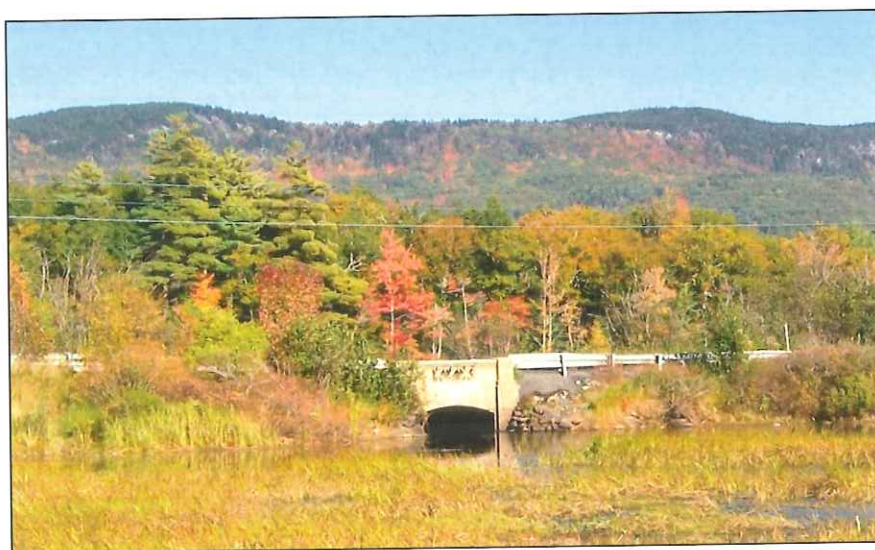
In every historic text, prior to the Windsor family owning it, the estate property is always referred to as the "Russell Farm". This explanation then seems to make sense. ⁹

All of the deeds were found in the Knox County Court House in Rockland. The chronological history of deeds listed, starts from 1903. This is because of the confusing early records and also because 1903 was the first time a deed mentioned the existence of any houses or buildings on the property. We do know that Ephraim Barrett acquired the first recorded *purchase* of land in 1797, which is still part of the present estate.¹⁰ According to Camden Historian Barbara Dyer, the Barrett family was one of the first families to settle in this area. In fact, the Barrett's owned most of the town of Hope, thus its early name, *Barrett Town*.¹¹

New owners came and went, purchasing large tracts of land, selling small parts off and trading other pieces. Some other owners before 1900 included Seth Bryant, William Ayer, Joshua W. Wentworth, James Carle, Henry Knight, Eva Rose, David Conner and Nathan Brown. ¹²

The Hope Road, also known as Route 105, once cut through the Richmond property. Records dating back as early as 1822 described the road as the boundary line between the east and west parts of the property. Lake Megunticook was located on one side of the road and the rest of the Estate on the other. In 1913 heavy rainstorms caused severe damage to the Hope Road, which, although it was not much more than a bridal path at that time, made it completely impassable. Edward Bok, the well-known philanthropist and editor of The Ladies Home Journal, had purchased a lake front parcel of the Estate, from Charles McKee in 1912 and called it Camp Rabbit. Because he was no longer able to reach his new lakefront camp due to the road damage, Bok offered to build a new cement bridge to span the stream if the town promised to build and maintain a new road. After a town meeting, the deal was agreed upon. ¹³

The bridge is known as the Old Bog Bridge and still exists today.



The bog bridge was built on the Hope Road in 1913 by Edward Bok. ⁹

Road construction began in 1914 and continued until 1917 thus redirecting the Hope Road around the estate.¹⁴ One part of the old Hope Road became part of the Estate's present driveway while another part remains a wooded trail for walking or riding horses. Route 105, which was first paved in the 1936, is now a relatively busy route used by commuters to get from Camden to Hope, Lincolnville and Belfast.¹⁵



The old Route 105 10
Now a lovely wooded path



The driveway and what used to be 11
Route 105 in the foreground

No one really knows who built the very first structure on the property but some feel that a small house that presently sits on a parcel of land, no longer part of the Estate, was the first house to be constructed there. There is also speculation that the farmhouse that still exists on the Estate, may date back further than all of the other buildings on the property. After the mansion was built, the farmhouse became the Caretakers cottage and remained that way for over fifty years.



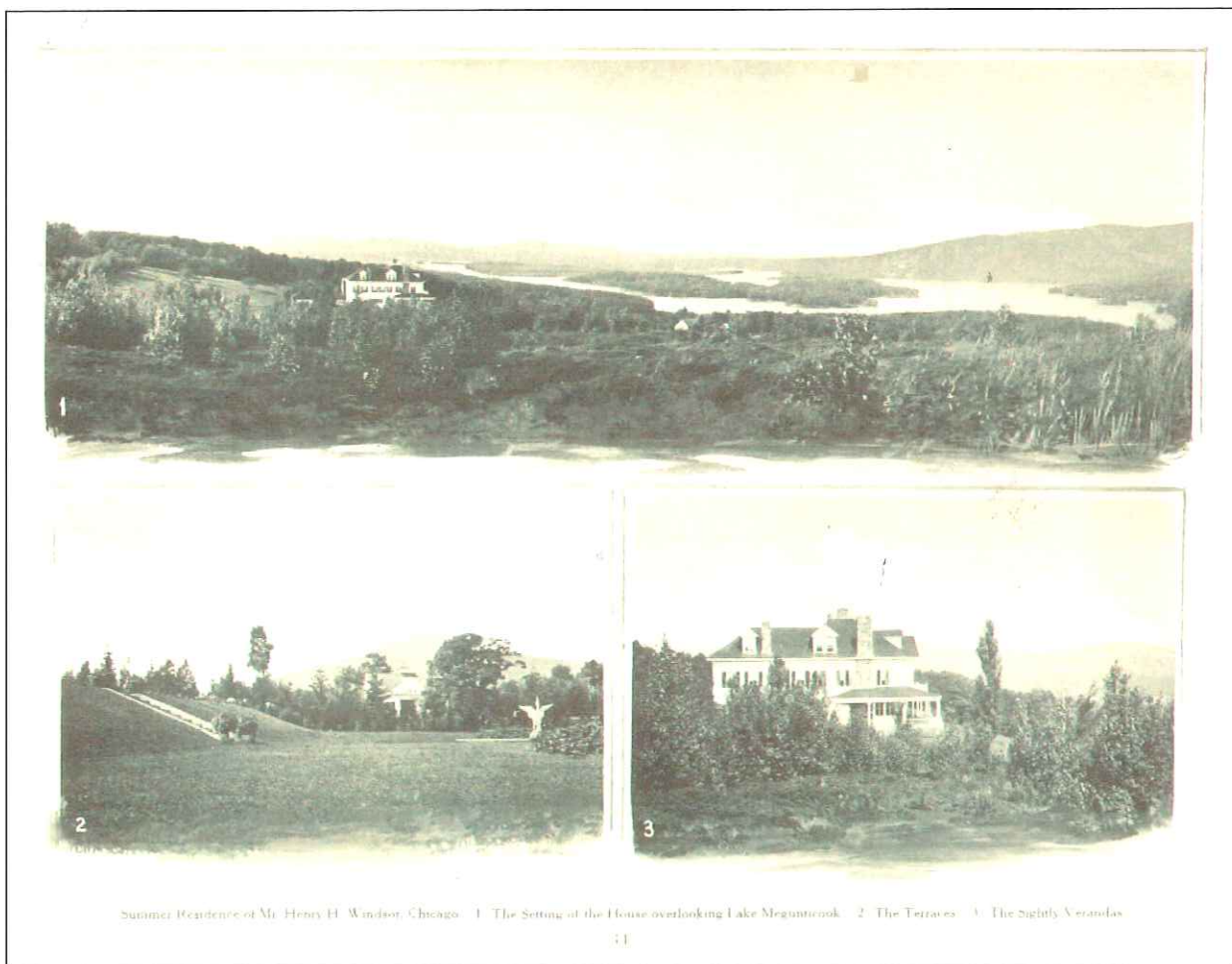
The farmhouse around 1920 12



The Farmhouse in 2005 13

Don McLean, the present owner of the Estate, discovered old landscape blueprints, which suggested that Henry Windsor, a tycoon from Chicago, built the summer mansion. Historical records indicate otherwise. Henry Windsor did not purchase the property until 1914 and records clearly prove the house was built in 1907.¹⁶ The blueprints are most likely a representation of the continued efforts by Windsor to beautify the property while he owned it.

Photographs discovered at the Camden History Center clearly depict the still untamed grounds surrounding the house in 1914. However, by the time the Rich's purchased the property from H.H. Windsor, much of the landscaping had been completed.



These photos show how wild the area was around the house in 1914, just after Windsor purchased the property

Around the turn of the century, during a period known as the "The Great Cottage Era" many wealthy families discovered the joy of leaving their city homes in the summer to vacation in the villages of rural Maine. Curtis, Keep, Dillingham, Strawbridge and Bok were just a few of those families.

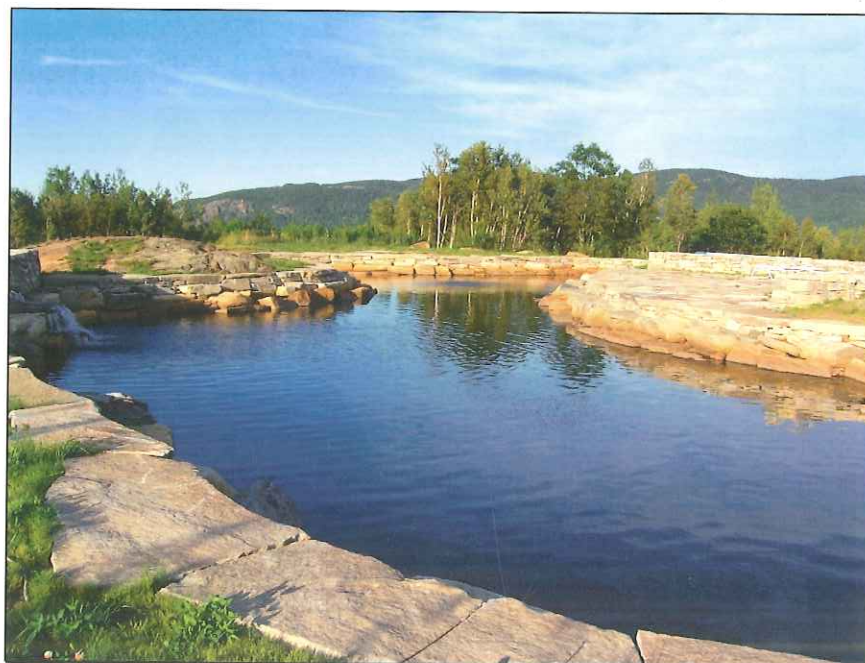
Mr. Charles McKee, the affluent and well-liked editor of the St. Louis newspaper, *The Globe Democrat*, was another. Not only did these foster-fathers build well-manicured, majestic summer homes throughout the area, they contributed directly to the aesthetic welfare of the entire town. These contributions included the Public Library, the Amphitheater, the Village Green, the Public Landing, and even the charming lampposts decorated with flower boxes. In addition they imported a sophistication of their tastes and needs. The Yacht Club, Opera House and Community Hospital are just a few.¹⁷ Charles McKee purchased the Camden property in 1906 and owned it until 1913. Based on a clipping from a December 1907 Camden Herald Newspaper that refers to the progress of the construction on McKee's cottage, he commissioned the main house or "cottage" to be built. Although considered a mansion today, during the Cottagers Era this huge residence was considered a summer cottage. The St. Louis Missouri Historical Society provided information about Charles McKee. In his obituary it lists him as a victim of the 1918 influenza pandemic. He died December 21st, just five years after he sold his estate in Maine. ¹⁸ McKee sold the property to Oscar Saenger, the nationally known Opera teacher ¹⁹ who owned it for only a year before passing away and having it sold it to H.H. Windsor from New York. ²⁰



Charles McKee 1918 15

It was long believed by locals, but not officially documented, that it was McKee who had a very large cement cistern constructed at the top of the hill to provide an ingenious, gravity fed water supply to the main house. Through extensive research, however, it was discovered that it was actually Henry H. Windsor Sr. who built the cistern.

It certainly stands to reason because Windsor was the founder and editor of the internationally famous, *Popular Mechanics Magazine*. He was known as a hands-on man who was fascinated with mechanics and how things worked. ²¹ The remains of the cistern existed until 2003 when present owner Don Mclean, commissioned a stunning natural stone pool to be constructed in its place. An enormous holding tank for water also existed on the third floor of the main house but was removed when the Richs moved into the home.



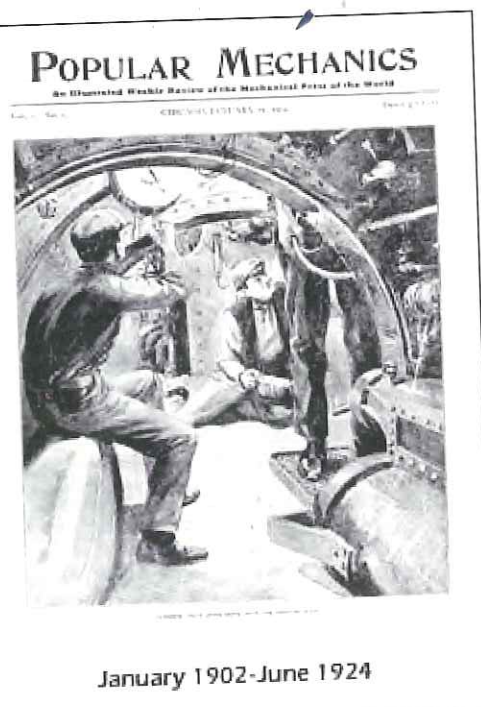
The present day pool where a cistern once existed

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As seen in the list of Transfer of Deeds, no one owned the property longer than the Rich family. Although Charles McKee built the main house, he only owned the property for seven years. Henry H. Windsor, who was responsible for landscaping the beautiful grounds, constructing all the other buildings on the property and first naming the Estate Lakeview, only owned it for ten years.²² Although the property is once again called Lakeview, the townspeople will long remember it as the Richmond Estate.



Henry Haven Windsor Sr.



The Rich Family

Walter J. Rich Sr., a prosperous man from New York City, owned a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. He and his wife Mabel, already owned quite a bit of land in Rockland and several islands around Penobscot Bay but they had long desired a summer estate in Maine. It would serve as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life for their growing family. On July 9, 1924 Walter J. Rich purchased a large estate called Lakeview which was owned by a wealthy Chicago man by the name of Henry H. Windsor Sr.. The Camden Herald Newspaper from July 1924 documented the story as follows:

"With the death of Mr. H.H. Windsor of Chicago, the estate "Lakeview" was placed for sale. This estate encompassed some 180 acres with a spectacular view of the mountains and lake. The main house contained 22 rooms, and a guest cottage had 10 rooms. The superintendent occupied a 12-room cottage and the farmhouse contained 7 rooms plus a 7-car garage with chauffeurs' quarters. Also included on the estate were sunken gardens, fountains, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. Mr. Walter J. Rich of Rockland purchased the property and renamed it Richmont." 23

Every summer for the next five years the Rich family packed their trunks and headed to the Coast of Maine with an entourage of servants. These included maids, a nanny, a cook and a chauffeur. Finally reaching Camden, a driver would meet them at the train station in Rockland and carry them to their summer getaway. The Rich family would make their way up their mile long, stone driveway happy to be returning to their country home.

Every summer, the caretakers Cliff Dickey and his wife Marjorie, who lived in the farmhouse at the bottom of the hill, had everything neatly prepared for the family upon their arrival. The servants occupied the third floor bedrooms of the main house while the family lived on the first two floors. The chauffeur and a maid stayed in the carriage house further up the hill.

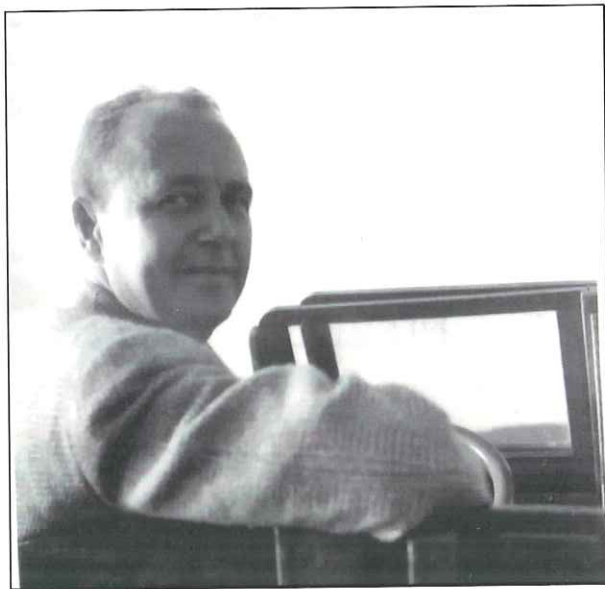
The Rich's quickly became involved in local and State affairs. On July 4th 1925 the Rich's hosted a grand reception celebrating Governor's Day. Each year the Governors of the United States held a conference in one of the States. In 1925 Maine was selected as the host State and Governor Brewster proudly showed the visiting dignitaries around the State of Maine. He ended the two-day tour with a visit to the Richmond Estate to view Lake Megunticook and Penobscot Bay. It was estimated that some 10,000 people visited Camden for the occasion. 24

This well-ordered and privileged life changed abruptly in 1929. Like most people in the United States at that time, the Rich family was hard hit by the Stock Market crash. Walter J. Rich Sr. was left no other option but to sell most of his property in New York City and move his family to a less expensive place. It was in that year that the Rich family moved to Maine and took up year-round residence at the newly re-named Richmond Estate.

Although Barbara was not yet born, she remembers her mother telling her how sad and scary a time it was. In order to cut expenses, all of the servants, except for the caretakers in Maine and one maid, were regrettably dismissed, given a small stipend and left behind in New York to find other work. Unfortunately there is no record of what happened to the servants afterward.

Barbara's parents, Walter Jr. and Josephine (Cynthia) Adams and their daughter Cynthia (Cyncey) moved into the main house on the estate while Walter's brother Eugene and his wife Eleanor (Pat) Flanagan and their daughter Patree, moved into the large cottage located next to the main house. Eleanor, known as Pat, was a native girl from Rockland.

For years Walter Rich Jr. made the long commute to New York by train, leaving his young family for the week and returning to them on the weekends. Walter Rich Sr. and his wife Mabel often spent months at a time in New York in a small apartment they were able to maintain at the New Weston Hotel on 51st Street.



Walter J. Rich Jr. 1930's

18

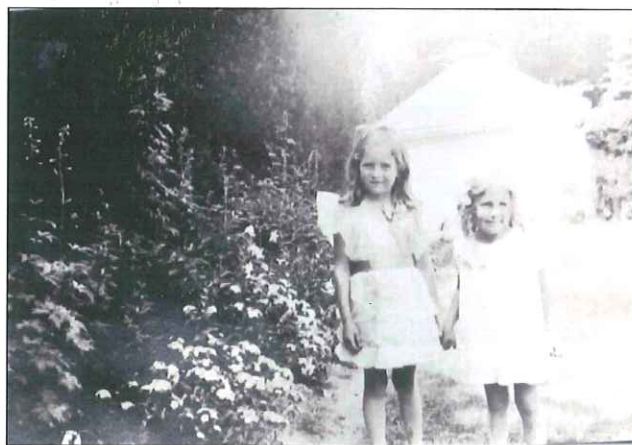


J. Cynthia Adams Rich 1920's

19



Eugene and Pat Rich 1920's 20



Barbara and her sister Cynthia 1935 21

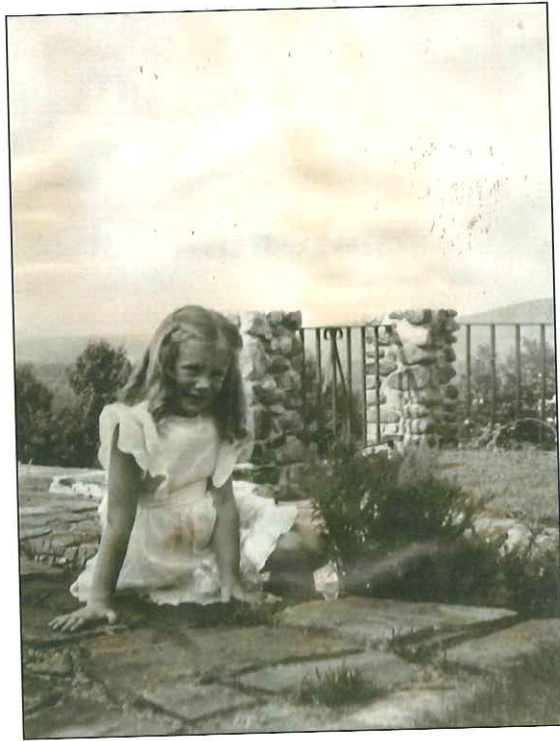
Finances began to improve and in 1931 Walter J. Rich Jr. and his wife Cynthia, gave birth to a second daughter named Barbara Anne. Barbara, affectionately known as Bubbles, recalled a lovely childhood filled with flowers, puppies, children and love. Although the family eventually regained their financial status, they never returned to live in New York but instead remained in their beloved home in Maine for the next 40 years.

Barbara's stories of riding the Italian cart pulled by Maude the donkey are most humorous. She recounted the times when children tried to ride on Maude's back only to find the donkey refused to move. When they finally gave the beast an encouraging kick, Maude would take off like a bolt of lightning and head for the lowest branches on the trees, knocking the riders off as she went. Maude was eventually given to a family in Brooks, Maine and rumor has it that the spiteful little donkey became the town mascot, wandering freely up and down the streets for years.

The Rich house was always filled with people. During World War II the Rich family opened their home to any and all service men returning from the war. The men were offered a warm bed and a hearty meal on their journey home. Every Christmas the Richs hosted a lavish party, inviting friends, local workers and neighbors to enjoy an extravagant spread of food and drink. The children would invite friends to play and the adults would have lots of dinner parties. As a small child, Barbara remembers mostly playing with her sister Cyncy and cousin Patree who lived in the cottage next door. She also spent a great deal of time with the caretaker's children Barbara and Ken Dickey.

Each day Cliff Dickey would drive the children to school in Camden and then proceed to pick up the men in town who would help him work on the Estate. At 3:00 p.m. he would pack the men up, drop them off in town then pick up the children from school. Barbara remembers walking to a young boy's house each day to have her lunch. The name of the boy was Doug Hall. Doug grew up to be the owner of the Bayview Street Cinema in Camden, which is still a popular movie theater for locals and tourists.

Sometimes in the summer, the children would make the six-mile walk to the Hope General Store for some candy. Quite often they would walk just as far to downtown Camden. Grocery shopping was done at the Camden A&P, which is now the Graves Supermarket. In later years the Rich home was the popular gathering place for teenage friends of the girls.



Barbara 1936

22



*Maude pulls the children in the Camden
4th of July parade in 1937 (Cliff follows)*

23

The Buildings

The Main House

When the Rich family first purchased the Estate, several houses and buildings already existed on the property. The colonial style mansion, quite common during the Cottagers Era, was originally built as a summer cottage and is a stunning sight perched on the top of a high hill. Records have not yet been able to be traced but it is suspected that the popular local contractor of that time, Mr. Cyrus P. Brown, may have constructed the home in 1907 for Mr. McKee. 25

Early photographs show that covered porches once wrapped around the entire outside of the house. All the porches, except one on the east side of the house, have since been removed to allow more winter light into the home. The main entrance of the house was on the west side of the home, covered by a drive-through carport. It too no longer exists. Using a method called re-photographing as featured in Kent Ryden's book, *Landscape With Figures*, it is easy for the reader to follow the changes that have transpired over the years. 26



The front entrance in 1924

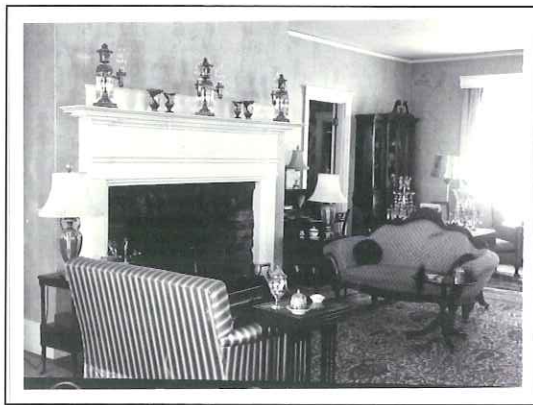
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The front entrance today

25

The interior of the house included a grand central staircase leading from the first floor to the second and third floors. Although the Rich's moved the staircase to the side to create more floor space for a foyer, the rest of the house still remains the same. On the first floor there is a very large parlor, dining room, living room, kitchen, bedroom, two baths and a back room. The second floor includes four large bedrooms, two with fireplaces and all with bathrooms and one study. The third floor, which once housed the servants, contains five bedrooms, one large common room, one bathroom and one enormous all-purpose room.



The parlor in the 1920's

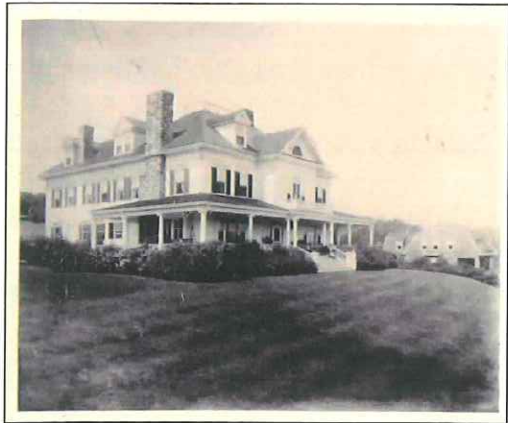
26



The parlor in 2005

27

The outside of the home went through many changes over the years. None of the stonework existed around the house when the Rich family moved in. The Rich's commissioned all of the work to be done in the mid 1920's. No records have yet been found regarding the stone masons who built the walls and pathways, or the cost of the work.



Before the stonework was done (1924) 28



After the stonework was completed (1930) 29



*The extensive stone pathways
led from house to cottage* 30



The walls still stand strong today 31

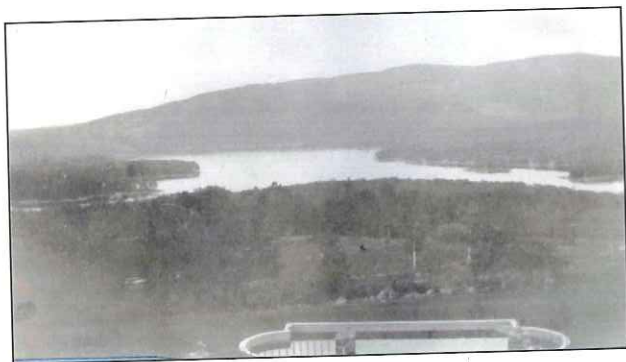


*Massive stone steps lead to the house
Photographed around 1930* 32



*Today the front hillside is covered with
wild lupine, lilies and ferns* 33

A small building now used as a shed, used to hold the large main house generator. Trees bushes and creeping ivy were planted all around the property. Cynthia Rich, Barbara's mother, loved flowers and planted beautiful gardens everywhere she could. A lovely fountain in the shape of a spouting crane once existed on the east side of the house while a luxurious swimming pool lay at the bottom of the massive stone steps in the front. For years, legend had it that a little girl had drowned in the pool and the owners covered the pool over in their despair. As most legends go, the tale differed considerably from the truth. Barbara dispelled the tale by explaining that her Grandparents had drained the pool because it needed repairs. It was her sister Cynthia (Cyncy) who fell into a *dry* pool. She was not even badly injured but the Richs decided it was time to fill it in before anything bad really did happen.



The pool as it was in the 1920's

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Where the pool used to be (2005)

35

The Cottage

Another home that existed on the property was a large cottage located beside the mansion. This building existed before the Rich's purchased the estate. Although there is no sufficient documentation, it is suspected that the cottage was built at the same time the mansion was. It was probably built by McKee, as a guesthouse for his brother William and other family members. After the Rich's moved in they re-shingled and remodeled the cottage. It served as the cozy home of Walter Rich's son Eugene, his wife Pat and their daughter Patree, for many years. Unfortunately the cottage was demolished after the Rich's sold the estate to the Oliver family. There is now a fenced in riding rink in its place.



The cottage in the 1920's

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*The cottage in the 1960's
a few years before its demolition*

37



Where the Cottage once stood

38

The Carriage House and Fire Pond

Just beyond the main house, further up the hill, there remains a large carriage house. Here it was that the chauffeur and a maid once lived in the top rooms of the building while cars were stored below. Owner Patrisha McLean, a renowned children's photographer, now occupies the space above, with her studio and guest rooms.



The back view of the carriage house and fire pond 39

The Rich family had a double pond dug in the 1930's for fire protection. Barbara Rich Anderson remembers her father hiring Oscar Howe, a neighbor from an abutting farm, who was well known for his water dowsing skills. He was asked to find a spring on the property that was strong enough to make a pond. With his magic dowsing branch Mr. Howe not only found one, but three very powerful springs. Mr. Rich had the crews dig in the places that Mr. Howe suggested and immediately the craters filled in with clean sparkling water. For years the Richs enjoyed fishing and frog catching in the summers. Even to this day the pond is used for the same purpose and enjoyment.

The Farmhouse

The Farmhouse, which is located below the main house along the road, still exists today. It was home to the caretakers, Cliff and Marjorie Dickey and their children Barbara and Ken, for forty years. Cliff came to work for the Rich family when he was just 18 years old and remained a loyal and committed employee until the Richs sold the estate. The farmhouse always buzzed with excitement Barbara recollected. It seemed to be a place where everyone congregated. Marjorie would can and put-up all the summer vegetables while Cliff tended to the daily chores and farm work.

In the summer months several milk cows were loosed into the fields while in winter they stayed in the barn with Maude the donkey and a horse or two. Chickens provided fresh eggs for everyone on the estate and an array of dogs were always under foot. Cliff was also responsible for plowing the long driveway in the winter months. Skiing and sledding were great pastimes for the families.

The Richs added a full covered porch to the farmhouse in the late 1920's. The house was eventually separated into two living spaces and later, owners rented the spaces to tenants. The McLeans now keep the house as a recording studio and office. It is thought that this house is the original building that sat on the Estate perhaps as early as when Samuel Russell owned the property. Certainly it has been renovated over the years but deeds indicate that a farmhouse did exist as early as the 1700's.



The old plow with the Rich and Dickey families in front of the farmhouse (1930's) 40



The Farmhouse today 41

The Barn and Outbuildings

Not much about the barn or outbuildings has changed over the years. Long ago the smaller buildings were used to store the farm machinery and cars while the barn sheltered the livestock. Sometimes in the cold winters, Cliff Dickey would set up a swing-set in the barn so the children would have somewhere warm to play. Cliff's son Ken used to build boats in the barn. Today the barn is used to house the three horses that live on the property. A silo and shed were once attached to the barn but the Rich's removed them in later years. The footprint of the silo still remains and the shed, which became the chicken house, was moved further back.



The barn and outbuildings around 1926 42



The barn and outbuildings 1950's 43
(Note the silo and shed)



The barn in 2005 44
(Note the footprint of silo and the moved shed)



The generator shed next to Farmhouse 45



Generator shed next to Main House 46

There is also another small building, which sits on the hill just above the farmhouse. This was used to house the backup generator for the farmhouse and the barn. The generator shed has since been emptied and is presently used for storage. The only new building on the property is a five-bay garage constructed in 2000. It was built for the McLeans to store tractors and machinery. This was done because the old outbuildings were no longer sturdy enough to hold a lot of weight.



Just below the barn sits the old chicken house now a shed 47



Once the old wood shop, now a sweet little cottage 48

The garage is located behind the old wood shop, which was renovated in 2003 and is now a quaint little cottage. The wood shop, as rustic as it once was, also served as the guest quarters for the Camden Shakespearean actors when they performed plays in the late 1970's and early 1980's in the Camden Amphitheater. 27

The Grounds

The Bluff

The grounds of the Estate are truly breathtaking. From the highest point on the property commonly known as "The Bluff," there is a vista with the most majestic view of the Camden Mountains, Lake Megunticook and Penobscot Bay. This is where it is believed that Edna St. Vincent Millay once stood and was so inspired by what she saw that she wrote her most famous poem, *Renascence*. Seemingly far above the world, one has a sense of visiting heaven when there. On cloudless nights you can almost touch the stars. In early June the field is covered with the fragrant pink and purple blooms of lupine while in August wild blueberries abound. Beyond the bluff are old stonewalls that border fields so lovely they look as though you are gazing at a painting. Although these rocky fields are no longer part of the estate, a weathered old wagon still remains there as a reminder of earlier days.



The bluff is covered with lupine in June 49



...and blueberries in August 50



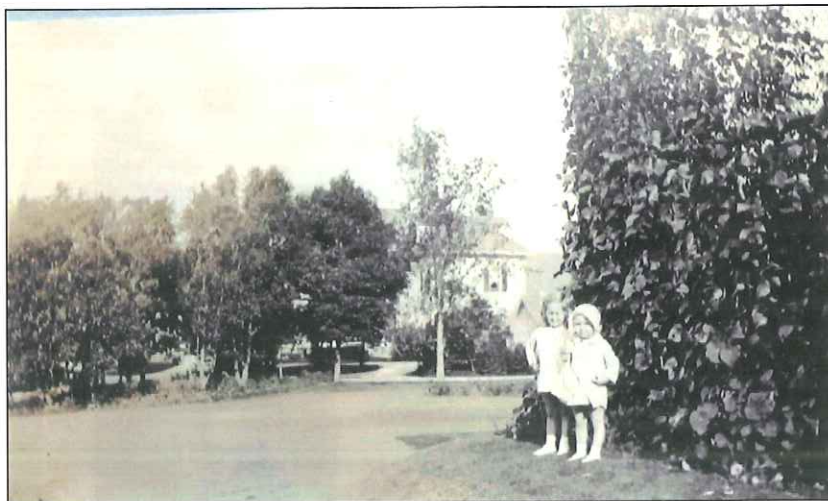
*A small part of the view from the bluff
looking at Lake Megunticook* 51



*An old wagon sits in the back field
no longer part of the estate* 52

The Tennis Court

Closer to the main house, on the lawn in front of the Carriage house, once sat a full size grass tennis court. For privacy and shelter from the wind, the Richs planted heavy creeping vines all over the 12-foot fence that surrounded the court. The raised grassy area is no longer a tennis court but today badminton and volleyball are played in the same spot.



Cyncy and Patree stand next to the tennis court 53

The Fields and Meadows

Upper and lower fields where dairy cows and work horses grazed, were bordered by stonewalls and white painted fences. Although those fields still remain undeveloped, they no longer serve their original purpose. Stone cisterns that once collected rainwater for the thirsty livestock still remain loyal to their purpose but now lay forgotten and hidden beneath brambles and brush. The lower meadow, close to the entrance of the property, once served as a potato and cornfield for the Rich family. Now it is known as Deer Meadow because it is a favorite feeding ground, not for people, but for the many wild creatures that live on the estate.



White fences once bordered the fields in the 1950's 54



Old stone cisterns can still be found 55



Once a cornfield, now known as Deer Meadow 56

The Driveway

Along the driveway, which was once part of Route 105, the Richs had several varieties of ferns planted in the early 1940's. Even today the fuzzy, furled heads of these faithful plants, slowly push above the ground each spring. In the autumn the drive is lined with these sweet smelling ferns as they turn bright gold in the fading sun. The driveway was once crushed stone when the Richs owned the estate. Later, other owners paved the mile long road leading all the way up to the main house.



*Several varieties of ferns were planted along
the driveway in the 1940's*

57

The Estate Entrance

The stone pillars and half moon walls that form the entrance to the Estate still look today, just as they did in the 1920's. Henry H. Windsor originally named the place Lakeview Estate and had letters spelling out Lakeview mounted on each pillar. When the Rich's purchased the property they changed the name to the Richmond Estate and removed the letters from the pillars. They never replaced them. If you examine the pillars closely you can still see the outline of the letters that formed the words *Lakeview*. When the McLean Family bought the Estate it in 1991, they changed the name back to Lakeview, however, they have not yet remounted the letters.



*The Estate's entrance still looks exactly
the same as it did in the 1920's*

58

The Lake



Bathing Beauties 1936 59



Barbara and Cyncy on the lake in 1937 60

Directly across Route 105, also known as Upper Washington Street or the old Hope Road, the Richs owned several acres of frontage on Lake Megunticook. Here it was that they would spend long summer days, swimming, boating, fishing and entertaining. Eventually the lake property was divided and sold and most of it is no longer part of the Estate. Barbara Rich Anderson still retains some of the original lakefront property and enjoys it with her children and grandchildren every summer.

The End of an Era

When Walter J. Rich Sr. passed away in the early 1940's, his wife Mabel kept the Estate for twenty more years. By then most of the grandchildren had grown up married and had their own children. Like the others, Barbara also moved away to start a family and a career as a school principal. When she visited her childhood home, she stayed in the Carriage House rooms. Eventually, Mabel began to sell off bits and pieces of the property, including most of the lake frontage and fields behind the bluff. By 1966 she was ready to sell the rest of the estate.

The caretakers, Cliff and Marjorie Dickey purchased a small mobile home in Camden and retired, after forty-two years of service to the Rich family. The Dickey children and grandchildren have all been involved in the town as local merchants and town representatives. After continuing an active life after retirement, Cliff finally passed away in the late 1990's. Marjorie spent the last years of her life as a prolific painter of landscapes, birds and flowers. She continued to garden, can vegetables and fruits and make all her own holiday gifts, until a few years ago when she too passed away.

Mabel Rich sold the estate to Mr. Ernest Oliver. Mr. Oliver made many changes to the property, including razing the large cottage that stood next to the main house. He wanted just one house on the top of the hill and also needed room for parking. He had the driveway paved and several other small renovations done. Mr. Oliver eventually decided to sell the property and did so in 1977. He built a smaller home located on a nearby lake. The new owners were land developers and had big plans to subdivide the estate and build houses on each lot.

Left For Ruin

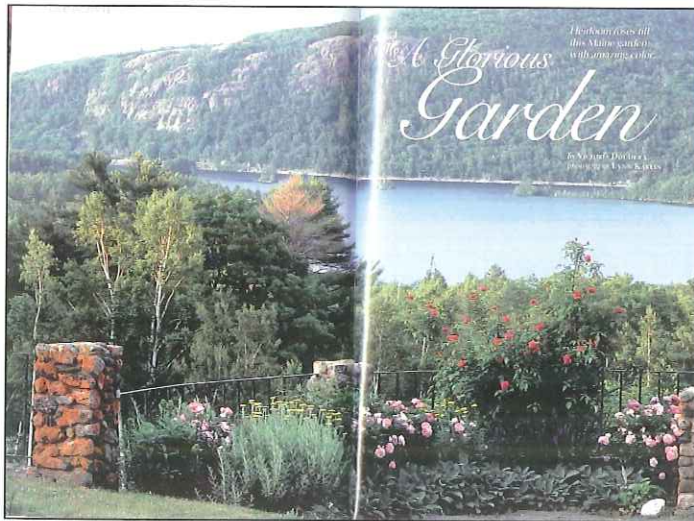
Two local business partners, Joe Soley and Gil Laite, purchased the property in 1977 and for seven years tried to make their business investment pay off. However, it was about that time that the national economy slumped and the real estate market crashed. While they waited for circumstances to change, the Richmond Estate fell to ruins. Teens from surrounding towns discovered the abandoned property and frequently visited the place staging parties, skate boarding down the long driveway and wandering through the many buildings. The situation only worsened when Heritage Bank foreclosed on the property and left everything to fall apart.

The Renaissance

By 1985 a buyer by the name of Dudley Hawkins Jr. finally became interested in the Estate. Although he and his wife Nancy bought and sold a great deal of investment property, they planned to make this special place their home. For six years they worked diligently to bring the Estate back to it's original glory. The main house and many of the other buildings were cleaned and repaired. The grounds were tidied and fences rebuilt. Sadly though, Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins divorced and the Estate was once again put up for sale.

Misfortune turned to blessings, however, when world famous singer songwriter, Don McLean and his wife Patrisha, fell in love with the Estate and purchased it in 1991.

Since then they have revived the elegance and beauty of this historic Estate. Don has paid meticulous attention to the interior of the main house as well as repaired, rebuilt and repainted all of the other buildings. 28



*An article appearing in Yankee Magazine
June 2004*

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*Pat in her rose garden
(photos by Lynn Karlin)*

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Likewise, Pat has become nationally recognized and celebrated for the spectacular gardens she has created on the Estate. She and her organic rose gardens in particular, have been featured in many magazines and TV broadcasts. The McLeans are committed to keeping the natural beauty of the property intact. To ensure this they have set up the Estate in a family trust. This means that the Estate can never be sold or developed. The wild acres will continue to be left untouched. Even the many horse trails and nature paths that have been created on the property, have been done so with gentle care in order to protect the plentiful wildlife from being disturbed. 29



*Don McLean enjoys riding his horses on
the many trails throughout the estate*

63

Foxes, deer, turkeys and many other wild creatures are regularly spotted on the Estate. Birds of all kinds fill the day with their songs while the cries of loons echo across the lake at night. Streams, brooks and vernal pools teem with life while the woods and fields are filled with an abundance of plant life.



*A resident fox is often seen
hunting in the fields*

64



*A tom turkey struts around the lower
lawn in full plume*

65

With the passing years and the progress of technology, it is easy to see that the Richmond Estate has not escaped the changing culture of rural America. Because of the easy accessibility to all types of products in today's world, the need for homegrown vegetables and livestock no longer exists. The Estate gardens are now more for the satisfaction of the eye rather than for the satisfaction of the stomach. The horses presently residing on the property are now only used for pleasure riding and not for plowing fields. And the ingenious cistern that once fed water to the main house has been transformed into a luxurious swimming pool.

Many owners have come and gone and although this beautiful property has endured centuries of change, the majesty and wonder of the land has remained the same.

It has been a privilege and an honor to be the first person to document the amazing history of such a significant property. Perhaps by doing this, the true legend of a great Maine Estate will live on for many years to come and will encourage others to appreciate the historical importance of places like this in the State of Maine.

Carole C. Mathews

Carole C. Mathews

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Lakeview Estate)
29. Carole C. Mathews, (September 2005) (Interview with Don McLean, present owner of
Lakeview Estate)

Photographs

- Cover photo by Carole C. Mathews
- 2 Photo page 5 Courtesy of Don McLean
- 3 Photo page 6 Courtesy of Barbara Anderson
- 4 & 5 Photo page 6 by CCM
- 6 Photo of Barbara Anderson's painting Courtesy of Patrisha McLean page 6 by CCM
- 7 & 8 Photos page 7 by CCM
- 9 Photo page 12 by CCM
- 10 & 11 Photos page 13 by CCM
- 12 Photo page 14 Courtesy of Don McLean
- 13 Photo page 14 by CCM
- 14 Scanned photo page 15 from Glimpses of Camden by John R. Prescott 1916
- 15 Scanned photo courtesy of Missouri Historical Society Necrologies Vol. 10
- 16 Photo page 17 by CCM
- 17 Photo page 18 Internet
- 18 & 19 Photos page 21 Courtesy of Barbara Anderson
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59 & 60 Photos page 40 Courtesy of Barbara Anderson
61 & 62 Photos page 43 by Lynn Karlin (Yankee Magazine), June 2004, pages 28 & 34
63 Photo page 44 by CCM
64 & 65 Photos page 45 by CCM

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The late Marjorie and Cliff Dickey (Interviewed in 1994)